



Iran Regime Disrupts VPNs Amid Crackdown On Activists

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Iran's continued suppression of dissent has seen more disruptions to virtual private network (VPN) services amid an ongoing surge in internet crackdowns to silence opposition voices.

Reports say the disruptions have led to decreased internet access speed, exacerbating concerns over online censorship and surveillance in Iran.

The latest bans come amid a broader crackdown on internet freedom activists, with reports indicating the detention of several individuals engaged in advocating for unrestricted access to online content.

Among the detained activists, Youssef Ghobadi's unofficial detention has sparked widespread outcry, along with the arrest of another activist known as "Segaro," who was active on the X platform. The two had been working to develop and distribute circumvention tools such as VPNs to help Iranian citizens bypass internet censorship.



The crackdown aligns with legal measures announced by the Iranian judiciary aiming to penalize individuals involved in the VPN industry, allowing internet users to bypass state sanctioned bans.

Last year, Iran's judiciary announced its intention to punish **unauthorized sellers and distributors of VPNs and other such tools** based on Article 753 of the Islamic Penal Code. According to the article, the "production, dissemination, distribution, making available, or trading of data, software, or any type of electronic tool solely for the purpose of committing cybercrimes" is considered a crime.

This comes as various evidence points to the existence of a government-led VPN mafia in Iran. Iranian MPs have accused the government of being involved in financially benefiting from internet censorship and the companies producing censorship circumvention tools like VPNs.

Among those is **Jalal Rashidi Kouchi who estimated** that the financial turnover of VPN sellers in Iran amounts to approximately 800 million to 1 billion dollars annually.

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